

Five minutes with Marta Andreasen, UKIP MEP for South East England – “UKIP could do more to attract women if they respected the women that they have”

Blog Admin

The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) gained the second largest share of the UK's vote in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. In an interview with EUROPP's editors, UKIP MEP and former Accountant of the European Commission, [Marta Andreasen](#), discusses the EU's democratic deficit, the UK's EU membership, and how UKIP should approach the next European and UK elections.



Does EU membership benefit the UK?

Well in general terms I would say that the UK's EU membership is more beneficial to the EU than it is to the UK. It is true that the UK benefits from the single market, but the UK would be able to develop other markets that would replace the business that they get from the single market. In fact the UK buys more from the EU than what it sells to other EU countries. Given the present crisis, the UK should be looking for other markets because the European market is shrinking.

If the UK were to leave the EU, should it adopt the Swiss or Norwegian models as an alternative?

Well the model cannot be Norway or Switzerland or any other country; the model would be a unique one developed by the UK. And why do I say this? Well, the UK has already been in the EU: it has already incorporated a lot of EU legislation. So the UK would have to do away with all this legislation during an intermediate process, and I think that this would lead to bilateral negotiations with separate Member States within the EU. So there would be a completely different agreement, not with the EU itself, but with other Member States. So talking about Norway or Switzerland as an example is not correct.

What more should the European Commission be doing to ensure EU funding is spent correctly?

Well I think the European Commission should be asking the right questions before they release the money. Suppose we are talking about EU aid, for example, they need to know that this goes to an administrative body in the country where the funds are being sent – a respectable body – and that this body will take responsibility to properly administer it and pay out the funding.

The same happens with Cohesion funding. The European Commission says that the responsibility for managing funding lies with the Member States and then they don't care what happens. If the funds are found to be improperly spent, then they ask the central government to return the money. But the money is sometimes paid out to bodies that are not part of central government, such as regional administrations or even private companies. Essentially there needs to be *ex ante* control, before the money leaves, because once the money has left it's very difficult to have proper control.

Do you think that the EU has a democratic deficit?

Yes, I think it has a democratic deficit because the legislation that affects our lives is produced by an unelected body, which is the European Commission. Our taxes go to an unelected body, which is the European Commission. So from that point of view I think it is an undemocratic arrangement. Of course people will say, “well you vote for MEPs every five years and they should represent your interests”, and this is true, but ultimately the institution that proposes legislation is the European Commission. Even if we vote in favour or against the legislation proposed, the Commission still keeps the power to develop

the implementing measures for every piece of legislation. People don't know a lot about implementing measures, but actually implementing measures can become a very different piece of legislation than the original regulation itself. They can force the Member States to adopt a lot of requirements that were not provided in the original legislation. So I think this constitutes a significant power.

With regard to budgets, again they can actually give the money to whoever they want. Of course there is a budget approved with certain lines, but within those lines they can give it to France, Italy, Spain (or any other country) without giving any explanations really.

Are the EU's institutions capable of tackling and resolving the economic crisis in Europe?

No, I don't think so because the EU's institutions were, I would say to a great extent, responsible for the crisis. Therefore I can't see that the bodies responsible for the crisis can solve it. Let me give you an example, the European Commission brought Greece into the euro, in the full knowledge that Greece was not up to the economic level of the rest of the Member States. It was Eurostat, the statistics office of the European Commission, who should have checked the statistics sent by Greece and they failed to do their job.

Then the legislation that they have produced in the last decade has not actually turned Europe into the most competitive and great economic power that they said it would. And they also requested a lot of money – almost one trillion euros went into the budget for the last seven years – and this has not produced any results. In fact we have gone down – the economy of Europe has declined – so frankly I don't see that the European Union can produce the solution to the crisis.

You are UKIP's only female MEP. Could UKIP do more to attract women to the party?

Well UKIP could do more to attract women if they respected the women that they have. It's not a question of putting female candidates on the list: you probably have seen that now for the [Eastleigh by election](#) they have recruited a female candidate. It's a question that firstly, the candidates should be put in lists where there is a possibility for UKIP to win the seat, and this is not going to be the case in Eastleigh – nor was it the case in the [Corby by election](#).

The most important thing is that once a female is elected, and she represents the people (and the party before the people) they should respect this female in as much as they are doing a good job. Putting myself as an example, I think that I have done a good job for the party and for the people that I represent, but I haven't had the respect that I would have expected.

Do you think that Nigel Farage is the right person to lead UKIP into the 2014 European Parliamentary and 2015 UK general elections?

Well the 2014 European elections will be very much framed around the possible referendum in the UK and in that sense it is possible that he may be successful. I'm not saying that he's the right person to lead it, but even if he's not the right person I think that he will be successful. Let us say that he will probably return the same number of MEPs that we have today if the political conditions stay the same, but a lot can happen in one year.

With regard to 2015 then no, I don't think he's the right person because he just doesn't want to get to Westminster (the UK Parliament). We are led by the wrong person. Nigel has no interest in getting to Westminster. If he was interested in Westminster then he would have stood in the Eastleigh by election. If he was interested then he would have focused on areas where we have a chance to get to Westminster. What he's doing is using our limited financial and human resources across the country in by elections where we have little chance of winning a seat. Yes it's great to get more votes, but that doesn't get us to Westminster.

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